[William F. Hawley]

26030 [????] [?]

June 24, 1940

Life History

William F. Hawley

Arlington,

Duval County, Florida. [?]

Personal Interview

Rose Shepherd, Writer.

WILLIAM F. HAWLEY

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“I was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, and my early life was spent in the “Crescent City. When I was about 16 yours of age, I went to Grand Island, Nebraska, where I spent a year with relatives, then located in Chicago. I thought I would like to take up office work and, with that in view, learned the [Munson?] system of shorthand.

“In January, 1880 I took my first job with the [Colt?] Manufacturing Co., on Lake-St., Chicago. After nearly a year with this firm, I became associated with Dr. Nathan Rowe, editor and publisher of the American Field, one of the first magazines in the United States

devoted entirely to sports. In January, 1881 I went with Dr. Rowe on a trip to High Point, North Carolina where the American field trials were held that year.

“While with the [Colt?] people, I stayed at the Y. M. C. A. in Chicago, and when they started a class in Ben Pittman Shorthand, I enrolled as a student, working in the office in the daytime — 9 or 10 hours a day — and studying in the evening.

“I became very proficient, so when Dr. Rowe went on his extended trip in the interests of the then known sports 2 chief of which was marksmanship, I was proud to accompany him as secretary. From High Point we went all through the south, and that winter my old Caligraph typewriter received a good deal of attention.

“My health broke down a few years later, and I had become enamcured of the southeast in my trip with Dr. Rowe, and decided to come as far south as I could get. In Chicago when I asked for a ticket to Jacksonville, the railroad ticket agent said he would see me a ticket only as far as [Jesup?], Georgia, and I could then buy additional transportation on the Waycross Line to my destination.

“On the 3d of January, 1886 I arrived at the old station of the [E. & W.?] on Bridge-st. and Bay, and I must say that Jacksonville was then anything but a promising town, with no indications of the city it is today.

“On the south side of [Bay?] Bay st., were retaining walls — the St. Johns River came within half a block of the street — and back of Bay on the north side were scattering strings of negro shacks. There was nothing on the south side. Hogan's Creek was the eastern limit. Beyond that was Fairfield, the older section and a town in itself. The fairgrounds were located in Fairfield, and this was one terminus of the streetcar line, mule-operated. Before the streetcars, when they had fairs, steamboats need to carry the people from the foot of Newman-at- out to what is now Commodore's Point. The Fair Association

was composed of prominent men of Duval County, 3 and they were really very successful in accumulating interesting exhibits, so that the fair was quite an attraction.

“For a year or more after I came to Florida I worked in the timber for a sawmill concern — the main business of Jacksonville at that time was naval stores and lumber — and there were always jobs to be had in either of these industries. You see I was trying to regain my health, and I wanted to be out of doors as much as possible. Soon I was strong and sturdy. One day I came in to the grocery and ship-chandlery store of John Clark at the foot of Bay and Newnan-sts for supplies for the camp. I was dressed in a woodsman's outfit of checked shirt and corduroy pants tucked in my boots and an old felt hat on ny head. Quite a crowd was in the store, which was a place for gathering and swapping news, and I overheard a young man by the name of Fuller, (Mr. C. M. Fuller, of Fuller & Co., Jewelers, of Jacksonville, with a magnificent establishment now in West Adams-st.) trying to sell Mr. Clark a Caligraph typewriter. “Well,” said Mr. Clark, “What if I would buy a typewriter, I don't know where I could find a stenographer.” This was my opportunity, so I applied for the job immediately, and strange to say, Mr. Fuller sold the typewriter, and I got the job with Clark's.

“I never went back to the wood-cutter's camp. The pay was a dollar a day, and I had not been able to accumulate enough to procure a wardrobe beyond the few plain necessities, so I was in a predicament — I had an office job and a woodcutter's outfit. I spoke to Mr. Clark, and he said:

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“You go see Mr. Alexander Ritz-Waller, who has a clothing store up here on Bay-st., and ‘Ritzy’ will fix you up, I bet.”

“Sure enough, after I explained my situation to Mr. Ritz-Waller, he said — ‘You look like an honest young man, I'll trust you,’ —and outfitted my from the skin out.

Library of Congress

“The change to town life was good for me, as in the camp we had a negro cook, and his biscuits were what was called [?] ‘ one-third and two-thirds “ , one third lard and two-thirds flour — and it took a cast-iron stomach to digest them. The boss and I got to buying ship's fare of hard-tack at Clark's. This we carried in our pockets when out in the woods cutting timber, and whenever we got hungry we just dined then and there.

“ ['?] When I located in Jacksonville in 1888, all business was done on credit — usually sixty to ninety days — but lots of old-timers settled their bills only once a year.

“This was the year of the yellow fever epidemic. I shall never forget that. The first case developed in he Mayflower Hotel, where the Palace Theatre now stands. A man by the name of Saunders ran a restaurant there, and one of his customers who had come in from Cuba developed yellow fever. He was taken to the sand hills, out North Shore way, where a klind of quarantine was established, and guards were placed around the hotel. Other cases developed and the houses were placarded with big yellow signs with the words “Yellow Fever,” but when it became epidemic, the signs were discontinued, the few people who were out and attending to the 5 necessities of life and business, walked in the middle of the street to avoid contamination.

“I had been [takning?] taking my dinners at the Mayflower, and it was not long before I developed the fever. I thought my time had come, but while I was quite ill, the fever did not last long. I was not given much medicine, but dosed with orange-leaf tea and hot mustard tea — the idea seemed to be ‘sweat it out’ — they did not use the word ‘perspiration’ but just plain old ‘sweat.’ All patients were kept closely covered, I often thought in self-defence, because the odor from a yellow fever patient is something awful.

“Well, I got over the fever, and was given the following card which enabled me to pass freely through the guard lines or from place to place in the county:

YELLOW FEVER IMMUNITY CARD

Library of Congress

This certifies that W. F. HAWLEY

A native of LOUISIANA

A resident of JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

Experienced an attack of Yellow Fever at JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA IN 1888.

Attending Physician)S(A. T. [CUZMER?].

)S(JOSEPH Y. FORTAN. No. 776 State Health Officer.

Another card in use at the time —

PASS SHOTGUN PATROL.

November 2d, 1888.

PASS MISS EVA M. CUZMER

Residing at JACKSONVILLE to [GILMORE?] AND RETURN WEEKLY

)S(Joseph Y. P

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“There were two thousand cases of yellow fever in Jacksonville during the epidemic of 1888, and an estimated 10 percent or about two hundred deaths.

“There was a general exodus when the fever was declared epidemic, and those who were able, refugeed to northern states, especially the mountains, as it was considered a higher altitude had something to do with immunity. Rumors abounded, and many ideas were prevalent. One lady, an eminent authoress, Mrs. Ellen K. Ingram, supported the theory that yellow fever was caused by microbes. She went further, advocating the extermination of

microbes by [concussion?]. Accordingly, city officials had four cannon brought us from the fort at St. Augustine, and there was one in Jacksonville belonging to the Wilson [Battery?]. These were set off at intervals in the downtown section after nightfall, the combined concussions causing a lot of damage in the breakage of window glass and store fronts, but the fever raged on.

“Another remedy was disinfecting the atmosphere by burning tar in barrels on the streets. This probably did more good than anything else, as the smoke exterminated the mosquitoes by suffocating them, although the real reason was, of course, not discovered until a decade later.

“Homes or locations where the fever prevailed were disinfected by the authorities using sprays of copperas, sulphur, and lime mixture.

“The Mayflower House where the first case originated was condemned and ordered burned to the ground, which order was carried out by the fire department. The location was vacant for many years, or until the Palace Theatre was built.

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“Bay street at that time was paved with cypress blocks. Long, heavy boards were laid on the sandy street and the cypress blocks — cubes of uniform size about a foot in measurement — were laid on the boards. Some people put forth the suggestion that a cypress swamp was a very unhealthful place, so maybe the cypress blocks caused the yellow fever. Immediately the authorities sprayed them, the whole length of Bay-st., with the disinfectant in general use.

“Those paving blocks, by the way, caused the city fathers untold worry, as they would not ‘stay put.’ Every big rain would witness the blocks traveling towards the St. Johns River in a wave of flood water, many of them actually washing into the river, and lots of them piling

up on the levee at the foot of Regan-st., which was a low place at the foot of a slight hill. Finally, they were done away with altogether, and brick substituted.

“Early during the epidemic it was rumored that the government was going to run trains in to remove the colored people to higher regions, it being considered that they were not able to take care of themselves. The rumor spread, and negroes came in to Jacksonville from the outlying sections until Jacksonville's colored population was greatly augmented. However, the government evidently thought better of the idea, if there was any truth in the rumor, as the transportation failed to materialize, and strange to relate, there were few cases of yellow fever among the negroes, they seemed in some way immune.

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“It is said that people who have an abundance of sulphur chemicals in their system, which impregnates the skin, are not subject to molestation by mosquitoes. Whether this idea might account for the immunity of the negroes to the scourge of yellow fever, I do not know, but it is something to think about. Many people nowadays take pellets composed of sulphur and calcium which they proclaim protects them from mosquitoes when they are obliged to work or live in mosquite-infested sections.

“The government, however, did arrange transporation for those who wished or were able to leave the city, and trains were run [into?] the station of the G. P. & S. Ry. at the foot of [Regan?]-st. They were packed to the limit, even the roofs of the cars crowded with terrified citizens who could not be accommodated inside. Some people in their haste left their homes with fires burning, food in preparation for the noonday meal, and doors wide open. Only a limited amount of baggage could be carried, and after the trains pulled out, it was amazing the things that one could pick up along the railroad tracks, articles that had to be discarded and thrown overboard.

“So many white people departed that in September of 1888 it was estimated the population of Jacksonville was in the ratio or three colored to one white citizen.

“One idea was promulgated that [champagne?] was a preventive. I purchased a half dozen bottles, and told a friend about it. He said he did not mind becoming ‘[vaccinated?]’ so he went with me to my room, placed some ice in a large goblet and helped 9 himself. I do not now remember whether he contracted the fever, but I know he had a large headache the next day!

“I boarded out in the Springfield section at the time, then known as Campbell's Addition, and as it was a / long walk from my work, I brought my lunch along in a black tin box. One morning as I was coming along, swinging my lunch bucket, a woman near the old City Cemetery calling excitedly — ‘Oh, Doctor, come quick! We have a fever patient!’ I was so surprised I started arguing with her, but she would not be convinced that the black box was not a physician's kit, until I opened it and showed her my lunch of cold biscuits with a slice of bacon, a piece of cake and a bottle of milk.

“Another amusing incident was that of an old colored huckster who lived in the Ortega section. He had a fine garden and did a good business in selling fresh vegetables to the housewives of Jacksonville. When the quarantine was established, old Sam started driving his car and white horse right into the city on his accustomed route, when the guard stopped him. Sam argued and threatened, but it was no use. The next morning he again appeared, whipped a long-bladed razor out of his boot, flourished it through the air a few times, shouting — ‘the Yankees never stopped me, and you-all caint stop me neither!’ Strage to say, the guard although armed with a businesslike shotgun, allowed old Sam to proceed, and he came and went regularly thereafter without molestation or argument.

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“In December, after there had been a good hard frost, the residents returned from their summer's sojourn, and community life in Jacksonville went on as usual.

“Speaking of Campbell's Addition, there were many large trees cut in that section, and there was a lake with quite a swamp and depression where Confederate Park now is along

Hogan's Creek. But my best girl lived out there and I made regular trips on Wednesday and Sunday evenings, which were considered sufficient ‘beau’ nights in those days. One Wednesday night it was cloudy, and dark as pitch, but I was trudging bravely along a path in a heavily wooded section near the old City Cemetery, when I heard steps behind me. If I walked fast, the steps behind me quickened; if I slowed up, they almost stopped. Finally I could stand it no longer, and I faced about and yelled, ““If you are following me, what do you want?”” “A deep base voice bellowed back, ‘I doesn't want nothin’, boss. I jes' wants company.’ I said, ““Well, come on, then.”” Yes, he was going to see his girl, too, so the two cowards — a young white boy and a big negro — walked cheerfully along the spooky road together. I was living then downtown, had a room in the Abel block, the other side of Drew's. I had left Clark's, and was working for a nursery man.

“There were many large groves in and near Jacksonville in the late 1880's. One of these was Mulberry Grove in the Yuken section, where the new Army Air Base is now being established, belonging to A. M. Reed, who had been a Jacksonville 11 banker before the War between the States. In 1862 he moved with his family to the plantation which he developed into quite a show place. It was about 1,400 acres in extent. Mr. Reed was very progressive, he had plenty of money, and he took a delight in coaxing rare shrubs and trees into growth.

“I remember one visit to Mulberry Grove with a [nursery?] budding trees. He put in the buds and I tied them up. We worked all day, and it was necessary for us to stay the following day, so Mr. Reed asked us to spend the night with them. They were a very hospitable family. The house was big a-rambling, with carriage houses, stables, ledges for the boys, and guest houses for an overflow of visitors. There were all kinds of shops to take care of the farm machinery, a harness shop, a carpenter shop, a blacksmith shop, and everything was in beautiful order. It was successfully operated by Mr. Reed and his sons and sons-in-laws for many years, and was quite a show place. Steamboats used to run excursions out there for sightseers.

“But anyway, we spent the night, and the next morning after breakfast, Mrs. Reed, who was a St. Augustine girl, gathered everybody in the diningroom, including all the servants , for family prayers. She read from the Episcopal prayer book, and everybody took part. This was a daily ritual with her. Her relatives lived in St. Augustine, and I have heard her say that after she married Mr. Reed and moved to Jacksonville she used to go back and forth visiting her family there, and if Indians were reported in the northern part of the county, she took the southern route home, and if the were in the south, she went as far north as possible to avoid them. You never 12 could trust those boogers, so people avoided them by leaving them strictly in their own territory when possible.

“Another show place on the south side of the St. Johns, now an exclusive residential section, was Villa Alexandria, the home of Mrs. Alexander Mitchell. He was probably Florida's first millionaire — a financier of Chicago and Milwaukee, a railroad organizer and president of the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad.

“The home was not so [preposessing?] from the outside, it was a frame structure, large and [accommodious?], and built for entertaining. It was elaborately furnished and finished, with articles purchased in her trips abroad. She was a nice looking woman, very kindly and charitable, and was one of the organizers of St. Luke's Hospital in Jacksonville, making possible the first building on east Duval-st. She gave liberally of her time and money towards its upkeep. The pride of her life was her young grandson, David Mitchell, whom she adopted on the separation of her son and his first wife. He was about ten years of age at that time. I often look at him now as he roams the streets of Jacksonville, a virtual pauper, once a millionaire, but defrauded of his fortune in one way or another, and I feel very sorry for him.

“I remember going to the Beach — it was called Pablo Beach — on the fourth of July, 1886. We had to take the ferry to South Jacksonville — the ferry operated on a half hour schedule — and catch the train, a narrow-gauged road — to Mayport. there were several coaches and three long flat cars 13 for the accommodation of the excursionists. The latter

were fitted out with board benches running crosswise the car, and the top was a tarpaulin stretched to keep off the sun or sudden showers. As the train left South Jacksonville there was quite a grade to pull up towards St. Nicholas; the fireman started shoveling in the coal, the cinders flew out, streaked back in a steady stream and set fire to the tarpaulin roofs, dropping through and burning holssin the white dresses of the ladies. I remember it caused quite a commotion, but nobody was seriously burned, the only damage being the small holes burned in the flimsy dresses.

“When I first came to Jacksonville in 1886, there was a big pond bounded by Clay and Bridge (Broad) street, and from Monroe to Forsyth — called Baldwin's Pond, named after Dr. A. S. Baldwin who had a beautiful home where the Elk's Club stands at the corner of Laura and Adams. There were benches around under the trees, with lilies blooming in the water, and it was quite attractive. By the way. I taught Pittman shorthand in a night school in 1890 and 1891, and Dr. Baldwin's daughter, who later became Mrs. George Proctor, was one of my pupils.

“Bay street was at that time the principal business street. The Drew store ran from Forsyth to Bay-st., in its present location, but in later years they have concentrated on the Bay-st. place. On the south side of Bay-st., next to the Drew building was [?] first store, and on the other side of Drew's was the Baldwin property. [?] was 14 then known as [Kohn, Furchgett?] & Benedict's was located on the southwest corner of Bay and Pine (Main) - st. Two flagstones made the crossings from one side of Bay to the other at the corners of the blocks.

“On the southeast corner of Bay and Pine-sts., was L'Engle's Bank, and on the northeast corner was the L'Engle Drug Store. On the northwest corner was [?] Cigar Store.

“I remember one time I went in to the Cigar Store with a bill to collect, and asked for Mr. [‘Huey’?]. I was promptly told there was a mistake, as there was no such person around as Mr. [Huey?]. I went back to Mr. Clark, and he said I was at the right place, but go

back again and ask for Mr. [Huau?] and pronounce it [‘Wew’?]. I did and got by, with no questions asked or anybody's feelings being hurt.

“Mr. [Huau?] was a very fine gentleman, a Cuban exile at the time, and head of the Cuba Libre Society formed for the promotion of freedom of Cuba from Spanish rule. He returned to his native land after the Spanish-American war. His son, [?], nicknamed ‘Polly’, was also one of my shorthand pupils later on.

“When Mr. [Huau?] desired to return to Cuba, it became necessary to get his wife's signature to an insurance paper, through some legal requirements. She was spending the summer in North Carolina. The insurance company wrote their agent there, asking them to locate Mrs. [Huau?], and they, too, got all mixed up on the name, and failed utterly, so that finally it became necessary to send a personal representative to find Mrs. Barbara [Huau?], and he nearly lost out by inquiring for ‘Bob Yew.” But he ran into a Jacksonville citizen who knew Mrs. [Huau?], she was located 15 promptly, and the necessary signature secured, so that Mr. [Huau?] could return to Cuba without restrictions.

“In 1886, the U.S. Post Office was located at the northeast corner of Bay and Market-sts. This was a very lively corner, as Jacksonville citizens had to call for their mail, and it was another center for swapping news, homely gossip, and items of local interest.

“The building now known as the ‘Old Post Office’ was erected on a lot, or rather two lots on Hogan-st., running from Forsyth to Adams-st., about fifty years ago ([?]). The property was purchased from Telfair Stockton Co., at a price of $40,000, marking a decided increase in real estate values for that period, but today the location is worth approximately three-quarters of a million dollars.

“Right across the street at Bay and Market was a pretty little park extending down to the river, and occupied by Jones' Boat Yard. The company built boats on orders, also had all kinds of boats for hire.

“Adjoining this, the Florida Yacht Club had their club-house built on pilings extending out into the St. Johns. On the north side of Bay-st. here, one had to ascend steps to get up to the sidewalk.

“There were many lovely homes here, too; the B. B. Hubbard's, [Cromwell?] Gibbons', and the Putnam's.

“Streetcars, mule-operated, ran out Commercial-st., (Riverside-ave.) and stopped in a swamp. A branch ran out through LaVilla from the corner of Bridge and Bay-sts. Clay-st.

was the dividing line between Jacksonville and LaVilla, which had a separate village government, with its own Mayor. The waterworks were outside the city limits.

“I had several different positions, in the meantime. In 1887 I worked for a wholesale grocery house which was agent for the [Dupont's?], and we had a magazine for the storing of powder and dynamite on Phelps-st., which was also outside the city limits.

“About this time the phosphate industry was in its first stages of development, and there was quite a demand for dynamite for use in the phosphate mines, also for blasting out of stumps in timber cut-over lands of the saw mill industry.

“There was a streetcar line which ran out Pine-st. from the river to what is now [?]-st. Up to [Hogan's?] Creek it was called Pine, and from there on, Broad-ave.

“The Hubbards developed Springfield, which received its name from a large flowing spring near the present location of Confederate Park.

“Riverside was not developed at that time, and Avondale was part of a large plantation.

“There was a fine orange grove at the corner of Bay and Adams-st., where I used to get splendid oranges, and many residents had orange trees in their yards.

“There were some beautiful homes out Riverside way overlooking the St. Johns. J. C. Greeley, the banker, owned one of those located on a block of ground where the Faith Temple building now stands. The property was enclosed by an ornamental iron fence. From the portico you could see miles up the river.

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“In 1886, Jacksonville had ten policemen, two of them negroes. The boys used to torment the latter without mercy, and when one would chase a youngster playing some prank he would run towards Clay-st., and from the middle of the street on the LaVilla side, he was beyond the policeman's jurisdiction.

“There was a big monument of brick, like a chimney, with mausoleums in the neighborhood of State and Main-sts., where the Hart family were buried. This was all destroyed in the fire of 1901.

“St. James Park was in front of the St. James Hotel, now the Cohen Store, the park now known as Hemming Park, named for one of the early settlers in a deal with the city council for erecting the Confederate Monument therein. Where the monument stands was a beautiful flowing fountain. Around the park was a bordering shade of sour (wild) orange trees. They made an interesting attraction for the tourists, but, of course, the oranges were not fit to eat.

“George W. Peck, (old man Peck's Bad Boy) was staying at the St. James Hotel one winter, and gazing out at the display of orange trees, he was moved to wonder why the ‘Boys did not steal the oranges' and only a sample convinced him why they were left severely alone.

“There was little travel to the beach until the erection of the magnificent [Murray?] Hall Motel by John G. Christopher. It was luxuriantly furnished, and for several years it was quite the thing to be a guest at this establishment. It was destroyed by fire after two or three years' operation, and there was not a cent of insurance.

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“General Spinner, who was U.S. Treasurer during the War between the States, lived in a tent on the bluff overlooking the ocean, and was considered quite a distinguished tourist-resident.

“It took half a day to drive to the beach over the sandy country road. Boats used to make the trip in a couple of hours and this was a favorite mode of transportation.

“Arlington used to have had a spur railroad from [?], with two trains each way a day. Alexander Wallace was the developer of this section and lived at Gilmore. He built the road for cash, and had planned to extend the line to South Jacksonville, but died before the plans could be materialized. After his death the property was involved in much litigation, and in the end, the service was discontinued, and the iron rails ripped up, and after the Spanish-American War shipped to Cuba.

“The first Clyde Line steamer came into Jacksonville in 1886 and berthed at the foot of [Hogan?]-st. It was a small freight-passenger vessel, but the occasion was considered a mighty step forward in water transportation, which indeed it turned out to be, and there was a great jubilee and reception to the officials of the company. The railroads then in operation gave passes to nearly every businessman on the line, and there was a big crowd in town. The leading hotels then were the St. James, the Windsor, the Carleton and the Everett. There was a little park across from the Everett Hotel on Bay-st., which was quite attractive and very popular. It had a bandstand where concerts were rendered on occasion. The land here was 19 a matter of legal dispute for a number of years. The railroad wanted it, and during the yellow feveer epidemic of 1888 laid a temporary track

across the parkway, and held possession that way. After considerable litigation, they finally obtained a deed from the Everett estate.

“After I married miss Amy [Cusner?] of Gilmore, I worked ten years for the Jacksonville and Key West Railroad Co., now a part of the Atlantic Coast Line, as secretary to the superintendent, Mr. C.D. Ackerly. I used to go home on Wednesday and Saturday evenings. I got myself over to East Jacksonville, mostly by walking, and a negro rowed me over to the Arlington for fifty cents, and from there I walked the four miles to Gilmore.

“Compare this with the recent failure of the Arlington Ferry, because people were too impatient to wait five minutes for ferry service to Arlington.”

(To be continued)